

LARRABEE & HINGSTON COMPANY, MAIN SHOP BUILDING
19 Howley Street
Peabody
Essex County
Massachusetts

MA-
HAER NO. ~~MA~~-149-A

HAER
MASS
S-PEAB,
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HAER
MASS
S-PEAB
2A-

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
LARRABEE & HINGSTON COMPANY, MAIN SHOP BUILDING

HAER No. MA-149-A

Location: 19 Howley Street
Peabody
Essex County, Massachusetts

USGS Quadrangle: Salem, MA UTM: 19.342400.4709500

Date of Construction: ca. 1840-ca. 1914

Engineer/Architect: Unknown

Present Owner: The Stop & Shop Supermarket Company

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Not in use

Significance: The Larrabee & Hingston Company Main Shop Building (ca. 1840-ca. 1914) is significant for its association with Peabody's most important historic industry, the tanning of animal hides. The Main Shop Building is the major component of a support/service industry complex associated with the area tanning industry. Larrabee & Hingston, founded in 1931, was a custom builder of wooden tanning vessels and was the last such facility in the Northeast when it closed in 1997.

Project Information Statement:

Stop & Shop's project to construct a commercial building requires a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District (Corps). After review of plans, the Corps and Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Office (MASHPO) determined that the proposed undertaking will have an adverse effect through demolition of a National Register-eligible historic property. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) entered into by Stop & Shop, the MASHPO, and the Corps includes recordation of the Larrabee & Hingston Company to Historic American Engineering Record standards prior to demolition.

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PART I DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

The Larrabee & Hingston Company Main Shop Building consists of three, connected, timber-frame, red shingle-sided structures: the core Main Shop (ca. 1840, 1892), the Office Ell (1892) to the southwest, and the Tin Shop (ca. 1914) to the northeast. The core Main Shop and Office Ell are built on fieldstone foundations, and the Tin Shop is supported by brick piers. The core Main Shop is a 130-ft-long, 40-ft-wide, one-and-one-half story structure with a standing-seam, tin-sheathed, segmental arch roof. The structure has a full, unfinished basement, which is accessed from the ground floor by a staircase in the northwest corner of the building. The core Main Shop basement is connected to the Office Ell basement at the southwest corner. The core Main Shop basement includes an open, concrete-floored area with fieldstone walls at the west end; a parts storage room enclosed by framed plank walls on the north wall; and two plank-walled, dirt-floored rooms at the east end. One of these east rooms contains the original steam engine footings and flywheel bearing pads on the floor. The core Main Shop floor is an open, 40-ft-wide span with no vertical structural columns. This space is created by an unusual roof support system consisting of 17 transverse, wood trusses with arches built up from nailed 1-by 6-inch planks, a single 40-foot timber for the bottom horizontal member, and nine, radiating, built-up plank struts. The core Main Shop floor is divided into large east and west shop areas by a nonstructural lumber-and-sheet plastic partition. The west shop area originally contained several large electrically-driven woodworking machines, including a drill press, planer, and band and circular saws, some of which were driven off overhead line shafting with leather belts. The east shop area contained a belt-driven chop saw on the south wall, and a belt-driven lathe with multi-speed transmission on the north wall. The primary access to the core Main Shop is a large, two-leaf, sliding door in the east end of the building. Similar, smaller doors are located on the east end of the building and at a loading dock on the south side of the building. The majority of the six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash windows have been boarded up or shingled over.

At the northeast corner of the core Main Shop, the 70-foot long, two-story, shed-roof Tin Shop addition (ca. 1914) extends above and north of the core Main Shop. This structure is supported on brick piers, creating a sheltered area at the northeast corner. On the ground floor interior, the Tin Shop space is occupied by parts storage racks and cages. A winding stairway at the northeast corner rises to the second story, which consists of a small enclosed room at the east end, and a large, open space to the west. A notable feature of this space are the exposed core Main Shop roof trusses, which extend across the floor.

The Office Ell is attached to the core Main Shop at the southwest corner. The Office Ell is a 38-by-20-ft, one-story, shed-roofed, shingle-sided structure with two-over-two windows, and a wood, raised-letter "Larrabee & Hingston" sign on the west elevation. Access to the Office Ell is located on the east side, where a covered stairway leads to a personnel door. The office is laid out with a central corridor leading to offices on the south and west side of the structure. A kitchen is located at the northeast corner and opens onto the west shop area of the core Main Shop. The Office Ell also contains a bathroom.

A 13-by-13-ft cyclone sawdust collector mounted on concrete footings is located on the south side of the Main Shop, and a similar 8-by-8-ft unit on timber supports is located on the north side of the building. Both units are attached to the Main Shop by tubular sheet-steel duct work.

PART II HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The 130-by-40 ft core of the Larrabee & Hingston Main Shop Building stands on the ca. 1840 foundation of the main mill building of the Aaron F. Clark's Lumber Yard, which offered "Planing, Sawing, and Grooving by Steam," according to a sign atop their mill which appears in a ca. 1880 photograph in the Larrabee & Hingston Company's possession. The main foundation and possibly some of the lower main structural elements of the building date to ca. 1840, when steam power began to be used for industrial purposes in the area (Wells 1972:239). Clark's Mill, originally a two-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed building, burned in 1892, and was reconstructed to its present one-story, arch-roofed configuration on the original ca. 1840 foundation. The Office Ell was also added at that time, and the Tin Shop was added at the northeast corner about 1914.

Clark's Lumber Yard operated until 1922, when they sold the property to John Jeffers Sr., who originally started his lumber and milling business on Foster Street in Peabody in 1886. During the 1920s, Samuel Hingston was the Drum and Wood Shop Supervisor at Turner Tanning Machine Company, the largest builder and supplier of tanning equipment in the world, located in Peabody. In 1928, Hingston left Turner, and began manufacturing wood tanning tubs in the basement of the old Clark's Mill, which he rented from Jeffers Lumber. The tanning tubs and drums manufactured here were used in the tanning process to hold large quantities of clean water, used for washing hides, and chemicals to soak the hides to accelerate the disintegration of the hair.

By 1941, Larrabee & Hingston were occupying the first floor of the Main Shop Building, and in 1945, Jeffers sold the Clark's Lumber Yard Mill and land, as well as the Lumber Drying Shed (HAER No. MA-149-X), Office Building (HAER No. MA-149-X), and several storage buildings, to Larrabee & Hingston. The former Clark's Mill building has always served as Larrabee & Hingston's main shop. The Tin Shop was so named as it was added to accommodate a metalworking shop. During the 1960s and 1970s the second floor of the Tin Shop was used for building fiberglass tanning vessel doors.

The Main Shop Building was the fabrication and building space for Larrabee & Hingston's tanning vessel operations. Lumber stored and dried in the surrounding buildings was cut and shaped using the belt-driven machines to form the sides and ends of the vessels, and metal, wood, and plastic hardware was stored in the building and was fitted to the vessels. The tanning vessels were completely assembled, and then shipped assembled or broken down.

PART III SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Engineering Drawings

None located.

B. Historic Views

Collection of Larrabee & Hingston Company, Peabody, Massachusetts. View looking north, showing Clark's Mill in its original configuration, ca. 1880.

**LARRABEE & HINGSTON COMPANY,
MAIN SHOP BUILDING
HAER No. MA-149-A
(Page 4)**

Collection of Larrabee & Hingston Company, Peabody, Massachusetts. View showing Larrabee & Hingston Company workers in basement shop, ca. 1940.

Collection of Larrabee & Hingston Company, Peabody, Massachusetts. View showing assembled tanning drum in Main Shop Building, date unknown.

C. Interviews

Buckley, Steven, former Larrabee & Hingston employee and Hingston family member. Interview by Matthew Kierstead, 28 June 1995, Peabody. Tape recording on file at The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., Pawtucket, RI.

Hingston, Steven, Shop Superintendent, Larrabee & Hingston Company. Conversations with Matthew Kierstead, 28 and 30 June 1995, Peabody, MA.

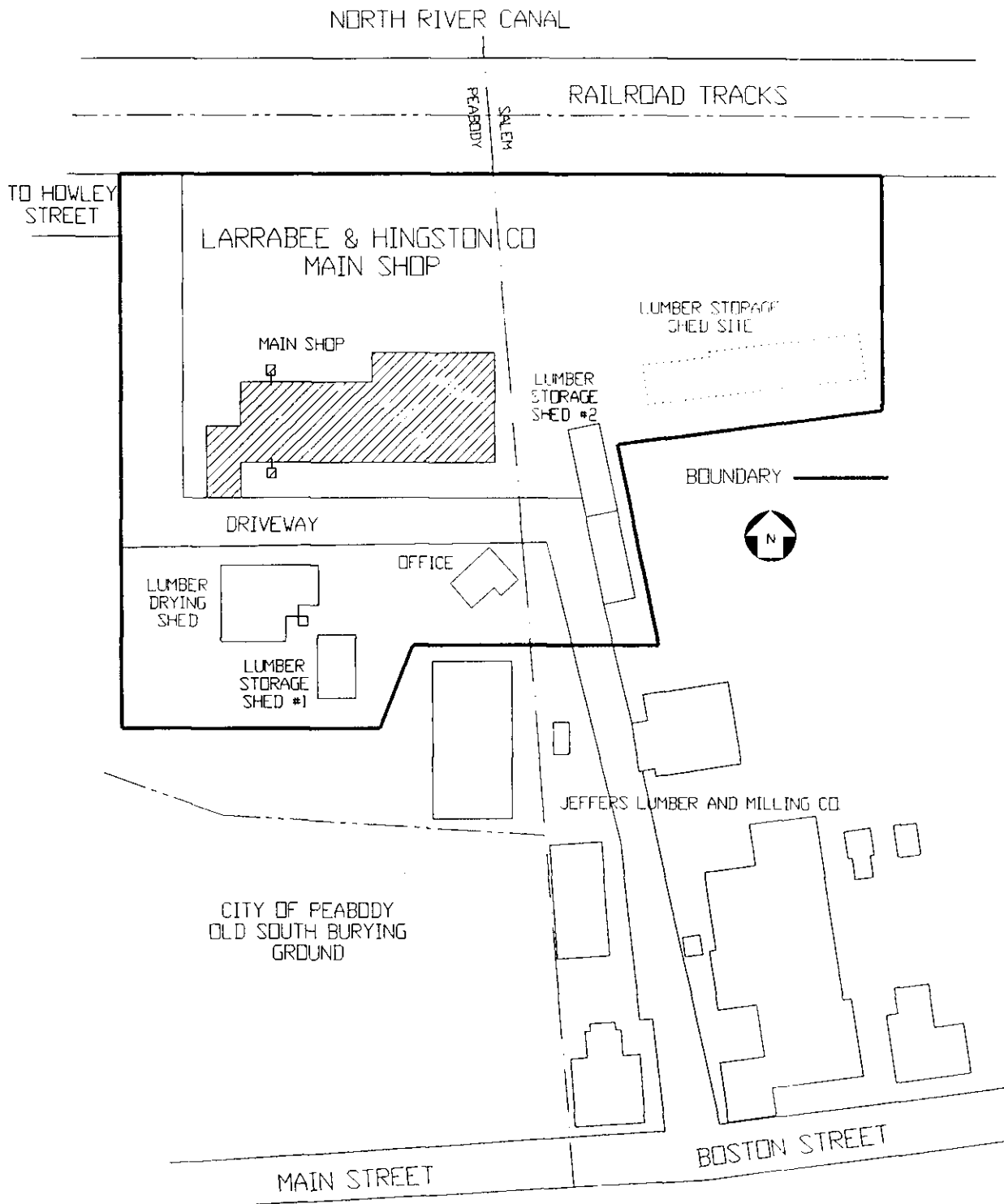
Jeffers, John, Owner, Jeffers Lumber and Millwork. Conversation with Matthew Kierstead, 28 July 1995, Salem, MA.

D. Bibliography

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Company, New York
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps for the Town/City of Peabody, 1872, 1892, 1897, 1903, 1906, 1907, 1914, 1920, 1929, 1938, 1949, 1957, 1968.

LARRABEE & HINGSTON COMPANY,
MAIN SHOP BUILDING
HAER No. MA-149-A
(Page 5)

Site Plan



LARRABEE & HINGSTON COMPANY,
MAIN SHOP BUILDING
HAER No. MA-149-A
(Page 6)

Existing Floor Plan, 1998

LARRABEE & HINGSTON
MAIN SHOP

